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**Fighting for Air.**

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## **Testimony to support H.B. No. 6496 An Act Concerning Green Cleaning Products in Schools.**

February 23, 2009

Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee, the American Lung Association in Connecticut supports H.B. No. 6496 An Act Concerning Green Cleaning Products in Schools with the changes proposed by the Connecticut Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools.

The American Lung Association in Connecticut supports practices that promote the purchase and use of low toxicity chemicals in our schools. As part of our work on school health and safety, The American Lung Association is a member of the National Work Group on Green Cleaning and Chemical Policy Reform in Schools. This national collaboration developed training modules for instituting school "cleaning for health" programs based on using environmentally preferable cleaning products and best practices. H.B. 6496 would establish a program that incorporates the conclusions of this national work group.

A green cleaning program is a cost-effective way to protect the health of students and school employees. Some cleaning chemicals are linked to a variety of health concerns. In particular, many conventional cleaning products contain ingredients linked to asthma attacks and other respiratory problems. Because asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism and affects nearly one out of ten students, it makes great sense to adopt a program that results in reducing asthma related indoor air pollutants linked.

One important aspect of this bill is the requirement that schools use only third-party certified cleaning products and that third-party certification is defined by statute. This ensures only products meeting specific, published criteria in areas such as health, environmental impact, and efficacy will be used and that the products will be regularly reviewed by the certifying organization as continuing to meet the standards.

Purchasing environmentally preferable cleaning products is only one part of a green cleaning program. We commend the authors of the bill for including provisions for both initial and on-going training in best practices as part of the program. Such training is essential.

Cleaning a facility as heavily used as a school is a challenging task. While it is important to keep schools clean, it's equally important not to expose children and school employees to unnecessary pollutants in the process. Since effective, high quality, third-party certified products are available, there is no need to choose between a clean school and a



healthy school. Establishing a green cleaning program will assure that both of these important goals are met.

We urge you to support H.B. 6496 with the proposed amendments offered by the Connecticut Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools. Thank you.